

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 05993 221713Z
ACTION ARA-14

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PANAMA 5993

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, PN, PQ
SUBJECT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEETING ON TREATY

REF: A. PANAMA 5966; B. PANAMA 5971

1. REFTELS GAVE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MORNING SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES. IT WAS ATTENDED BY TORRIJOS, THE PRESIDENT, THE VICE PRESIDENT, THE CABINET, THE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION, THE GENERAL STAFF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD, THE TREATY NEGOTIATORS -- IN A WORD, EVERYONE OF IMPORTANCE IN THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT. SEVERAL THOUSAND PANAMANIAN GATHERED OUTSIDE THE LEGISLATIVE PALACE, WHERE THE MEETING WAS HELD, TO HEAR THE SPEECHES AND PARTICIPATE IN THE LAUNCHING OF THE CAMPAIGN IN FAVOR OF A NEW TREATY. THEIR FERVOR MUST HAVE BEEN OF A RATHER EVANASCENT QUALITY, HOWEVER, SINCE BY 12:30 P.M. -- WHEN TORRIJOS SPOKE -- MOST OF THEM WERE GONE.

2. THE MORNING SESSION WAS TELEVISED. TORRIJOS SPOKE EX-TEMPORANEOUSLY, GLANCING ONLY A FEW TIMES AT HIS NOTES. AS USUAL, HIS PERFORMANCE WAS ONLY FAIR: HE LACKS THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 PANAMA 05993 221713Z

FLAIR FOR THE DRAMATIC WHICH MAKES A GREAT SPEAKER.

3. THOUGH A NUMBER OF THINGS WERE SAID WHICH WE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO HAVE LEFT UNSPOKEN (SUCH AS IMPLICIT THREATS OF VIOLENCE IF THE SENATE REJECTS THE TREATY), THERE WAS LITTLE IF ANYTHING NEW. JUST AS THERE ARE THINGS WE MUST SAY TO OUR PUBLIC WHICH EMBARRASSES THE

PANAMANIAN (E.G., THE RIGHT TO DEFEND THE CANAL FOREVER), THEY TOO MUST SPEAK TO THEIR AUDIENCE.

4. THE AFTERNOON MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY WAS A QUESTION-AND-ANSWER SESSION. MOST OF THE QUESTIONS WERE PROBING AND RELEVANT. THE NEGOTIATORS RESPONDED WITH POSITIONS WHICH ARE ALREADY BECOMING FAMILIAR. A NUMBER OF THE HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS WERE ABSENT FROM THE AFTERNOON SESSION.

5. AT THE END OF THE SESSION THE ASSEMBLY "UNANIMOUSLY" PASSED A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE NEW TREATY, THOUGH ONE DELEGATE ANNOUNCED HE HAD ABSTAINED, NOT HAVING SEEN TREATY LANGUAGE.
JORDEN

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Message Attributes

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